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2016 ELECTION INTERFERENCE

Special counsel Mueller indicts 13 Russians

BY DAVID S. CLOUD AND JOSEPH TANFANI
Tribune Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — Special counsel Robert Mueller indicted 13 Russians and three Russian companies Friday, accusing them of using stolen identities, fake campaign events and hundreds of social media accounts while spending millions of rubles to interfere in the 2016 presidential election in a secret effort to aid the Trump campaign.

The 37-page indictment, the first charges by Mueller's office accusing Moscow of illegal meddling in the election, says that the Internet Research Agency, a Rus-



MUELLER

sian firm known for using troll accounts to post on news sites, orchestrated the interference campaign and that its operatives tried to communicate with at least three unnamed Trump campaign officials using fake identities.

"By early to mid-2016, Defendants' operation included supporting the presidential campaign of then-candidate Donald J. Trump ... and disparaging Hillary Clinton," says the indictment.

Although the indictment alleges that the Russians contacted unnamed people in the Trump campaign, it does not allege that any Trump campaign officials knowingly cooperated with the effort.

"There is no allegation that any American was a willing participant" in the Russian plan, and there is no allegation that it altered the outcome of the election, Deputy Attorney General Rod J. Rosenstein said in a brief news conference discussing the indictment.

Nonetheless, the indictment seriously undermines President Donald Trump's repeated contention that the entire Russia investigation is a "hoax" or "witch hunt."

It details specific activities the Russians took, initially focused on creating general discord in the U.S., but eventually focused specifically on boosting Trump's campaign.

At least some of the indicted people have previously been identified as having close ties to Russian President Vladimir Putin.

White House press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders said Trump had been briefed on the indictment.

A few hours later, Trump responded with a tweet, suggesting that the indictment

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BIRMINGHAM SCHOOL BUSES CRASH ON MCCLELLAN BOULEVARD



Kirsten Fiscus/The Anniston Star

Two Ramsay High School buses from Birmingham collided while on their way to the Northeast Regional tournament in Jacksonville.

Five students, one driver sent to hospital after collision

BY KIRSTEN FISCUS
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What began as a fun morning and an hour-long drive from Birmingham was halted abruptly after two school buses carrying Ramsay High School students collided on McClellan Boulevard near Baltzel Gate Road.

Five students and one adult, a bus driver, were taken to Regional Medical Center with minor injuries, Anniston police Sgt. Michael Webb said.

The students were on their way to a girls basketball game against Center Point this morning in the Northeast Regional tournament in Jacksonville.

Webb said the first bus was in the left hand lane and started to slow down for

the changing stop light.

"The second one was in the right lane and was trying to get over into the left lane," Webb said. "The driver was looking to see if she could get over and didn't see the other bus slowing down."

Desmond Heath, a senior at the school, said he was on the first bus.

"We were just riding along and slowing down at the light, then bam," he said. "They just hit us."

Heath said students on the first bus lurched forward hitting the seat back in front of them.

"It was just crazy," he said. "It makes me kind of nervous to be riding on another one."

A school administrator at the scene declined to comment on the incident.

"It's just our policy we have to go through higher ups," he said.

The wreck, which occurred around 9 a.m., forced traffic onto the right shoulder of the northbound lanes of McClellan Boulevard for more than an hour as police, firefighters and EMS personnel worked.

Randy Reaves, Calhoun County Schools' safety and security director, arrived at the scene and called for two of his district's buses to pick up the students. Uninjured students were taken from the scene around 9:45 a.m.

"Two Birmingham buses are headed this way right now to pick up the students after the game," Webb said.

Staff Writer Kirsten Fiscus: 256-235-3563. On Twitter @KFiscus—Star.

FBI warned of Florida suspect's desire to kill but did not act

BY KATIE BENNER, PATRICIA MAZZEI AND ADAM GOLDMAN
The New York Times

The FBI received a tip last month from someone close to Nikolas Cruz that he owned a gun and had talked of committing a school shooting, the bureau revealed Friday, but it acknowledged that it had failed to investigate.

The tipster, who called an FBI hotline on Jan. 5, told the bureau that Cruz had a "desire to kill people, erratic behavior and disturbing social media posts," the FBI said.

The information should have been assessed and forwarded to the Miami FBI field office, the bureau said. But that never happened. On Wednesday, Cruz,

19, killed 17 students and teachers at his former high school in Parkland, Florida, law enforcement officials said.

The tip about Cruz appeared to be the second in four months, after another person told the bureau about online comments from Cruz that he wanted to become "a professional school shooter."

The news comes as the FBI is under considerable pressure over its investigation into President Donald Trump, with frequent attacks focused on the work of Robert S. Mueller III, the special counsel's office overseeing the inquiry into Russian election interference.

In an unusually sharp public rebuke of his own agents, Attorney General Jeff

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Saul Martinez/The New York Times

Lavinia Zapata embraces her son, Jorge, after a mass shooting at the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Fla., on Wednesday.

Woman struck, killed by train

Husband charged with murder

BY KIRSTEN FISCUS
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An Anniston woman was struck by a train Thursday afternoon and her husband remained in the Anniston City Jail on Friday morning, charged with murder in the incident, officials said.

Police responded to a set of train tracks near Cooper Circle in the Wellborn area around 4:15 p.m. after receiving a report that a person had been struck by a train, Anniston police Sgt. Kyle Price said Friday morning.

There, police found Connie Burgess, 41, suffering from wounds caused by the train, Calhoun County Coroner Pat Brown said.

Burgess was taken to Regional Medical Center, where she died from her injuries and was pronounced dead at 5:01 p.m., Brown said.

Police also found Burgess' husband, Benny Burgess, 56, at the scene, Price said.

"We talked with a couple of witnesses working on the train and we talked with Mr. Burgess," Price said. "Mr. Burgess did not have a lot to say on the subject."

Price said crew members on the cargo train had seen the couple walking on the tracks.

"The witnesses on the train obviously couldn't hear what they were talking about but based on their observations we arrested Mr. Burgess for murder," Price said.

The sergeant declined to say if the witnesses specified if Burgess shoved his wife back onto the tracks as the train approached.

Price said Burgess' bond or court date would likely be set later today.



B. BURGESS

CALHOUN COUNTY

Flu remains widespread as deaths from the virus rise

BY PATRICK MCCRELESS
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Calhoun County still has widespread flu activity that began a month ago, while deaths from the disease continue to rise across Alabama and the nation, recent reports state.

The Alabama Department of Public Health is currently investigating 98 potential flu-related deaths, up from 87 deaths last week. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on Friday reported another 22 flu-related pediatric deaths nationwide, for a total 84 child deaths for the season. Meanwhile, the county Health Department reports that it still has flu vaccine available, but at least one area pharmacist says he ran out of shots weeks ago.

The ADPH reports that the flu is widespread

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OBITUARIES, 4A

Traci Shawn Morrison Goodspeed, Oxford
Pastor Willie Geneva Hayes, Lineville
Alicemae Bernice Morris, Anniston

Retired Army Sgt. 1st Class Joean Ritter, Weaver
Shirley B. Traywick, Anniston
Jeffery L. Walker, Oxford

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Ellie Medley,
Pleasant Valley